

Review article

EVOLUTION OF TOURISM INFORMATION SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is described as the activities that involve someone travelling to and staying in places outside of their original vicinity for the purpose of leisure, holiday and other purposes. The issue of tourism information system in Nigeria is not new. The importance of Tourism cannot be over emphasized, when talking about its economic benefits, social benefits, and financial benefits. Researchers at different levels have proposed and used wide ranging methods and approaches to improve tourism in Nigeria. However, the theoretical background to support this approaches and methods are not sufficient. In order to develop a more solid background for several research works on tourism, this review paper discusses into detail, the current trends on tourism in Nigeria, different challenges several existing models that have been developed by researches and their limitations. This paper concluded that Tourism in Nigeria still has several challenges that require urgent attention, and also suggest different approaches to solve these challenges.

Keyword: tourism, tourist, information, system, review

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the tourism industry has shown a rapid development and obvious change. It has brought in a large amount of income to the economy of the country (Ahmad, *et al.*, 2012). Tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in the world particularly in the advanced countries; however, it remains another untapped potential income generator in some developing countries like Nigeria. According to Ojo, (2014), tourism is

described as a process or activity that involves someone travelling to and staying in places outside their original vicinity for the purpose of leisure, holiday and for other purposes. Today, people could travel far away from home to participate in events that they find interesting in tourist centres within and outside their country. Nigeria, being a coastal country located along the South Atlantic Ocean has a wide range of beaches and other marine beauties. Nigeria is very rich in historical monuments, arts, sports, places of beauty, socio-cultural events, parks, museums, relaxation sites, waterfalls, and resorts, among others that can help her economy to grow (Akpan and Obang, 2012). There are about 142 tourist destinations that spread across the 36 states of the federation. Some of the tourism centres exist naturally, while others are manmade. Many of the tourist centres have attractive features, which are neither known nor patronized due to the fact that they are not easily accessible to the world. Meanwhile, all these tourism potentials are enough to make Nigeria a good and enticing tourism destination, if there are adequate awareness and information that can properly guide prospective tourists. According to Ayeni and Ebohoh (2012), tourism has become an alternative revenue source because of its multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy, creating large volume of jobs for both skilled and unskilled personnel. It offers various economic and social benefits, and people are developing more interest in the industry (Abdulhamid and Gana, 2010). Tourism in many advanced countries has become major source of income and an economic backbone. It has become a major driver of socio-economic development in Western society and an alternative strategy for sustainability and diversification of economy (Akpan and Obang, 2012). However, over the years in Nigeria, tourism sector has been experiencing disdain (Ojo, 2014). In recent time, international attention on tourism as a critical sector of the economy has greatly increased (Ekundayo and Yusuf, 2014). This paper discusses tourism as a critical sector, and emphasizes on the importance of Tourism in Nigeria. Also, the existing challenges that stunt the growth of tourism sector and some possible solutions to such challenges are discussed.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: **Section II** discusses some existing works on tourism, **Section III** discusses some tourist attractions we have in Nigeria, **Section IV** highlights some existing problems and proposes possible solutions to such problems, **Section V** contains our conclusion and recommendation, while **Section VI** list our references.

II. EXISTING WORKS

Tourism has been described as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal, business and or professional purposes (Ojo, 2014; World Tourism Organization, 2008). According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2012), tourism is defined as a temporary or short-term movement of people to destination outside the place where they normally live and work, and their activities during the stay at each destination. It is a collection of activities and services that delivers a travel experience, including transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking, entertainment, businesses activities and other hospitality services (World Tourism Organization, 2008). According to Taylor and Holloway (2006), tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.

Tourism primarily is seen as when people visit a particular place for sightseeing, visiting, taking vacation, and having fun. Although, they might also enjoy their leisure time participating in various activities like sports, talking, sunbathing, taking rides, touring, reading, singing or relaxing and enjoying the environment (Heum, *et al*, 2012). It is a place of interest which a tourist intends to visit for leisure and other purposes. According to Bajaj (2015), one's travelling style depends on his or her interests either to seek new experience or just to enjoy. Ernie and Wall (2002) classified tourism destination into two: namely attraction or recreation and hospitality. Attraction or recreation refers to sites designed for sightseeing, photo taking, game playing, and relaxation to have fun. They include zoo, museum, monuments, beach and amusement park. Hospitality in the other vein

encompasses providing guests with foods, drinks, and leisure facilities including hotels accommodation and resorts (Ayeni and Ebohoh, 2012).

The importance of tourism in the development and economy of a country cannot be over emphasized. In the social terms, the immediate benefit of tourism industry is the ability to bring people out of the unemployment circle. In other words, it creates job opportunity and also caters for both skilled and unskilled employment and it is known to be a labour-intensive industry which provides job per unit of investment compared to any other industry. The industry gives room to partnership and entrepreneurship within the tourism business concept thereby creating an innovation and bringing about economic activity (Adebayo, 2014). Based on the increase in tourism awareness all over the world, it has been a general notice that social and economic tourism play a vital role in the sustainability of the global economy. It is directly the pillars of sustaining economy of a country. Social and economic tourism definitely will modify the financial and social being of a tourist centre environment. According to Abdulhamid and Gana (2010), tourism offers various economic and social benefits and people are becoming more interested in the industry. Today, people travel far away from home to participate in an event that they find interesting in tourist centres within and outside their country.

According to Okpolo *et al*; (2002), tourism stimulates employment creation of a country. It is a valuable source of employment globally. The tourism sector and its sub sector provide a wide range of jobs ranging from the unskilled to the highly specialized labour. According to World Tourism Organization (2008), tourism industry is growing and there had been a widespread increase in the expansion of tourism throughout the globe, and this has made it possible for many developing countries to develop tourism at their own pace for socio-economic advancement. Generally, tourism has a vital impact on the society, environment and socio-economic aspect of any country. Developing tourism requires an abundant amount of factors besides building a lovely lodge or having a wealth of beauty and wildlife at your doorstep. According to Adeleke (2009), a successful tourism sector relies on good safety and security, health and hygiene, infrastructure, education and proper information. Alegre and Garau. (2011) contributed that the tourism industry consists of certain facilities and services that are indispensable to a proper tourism development in any country. In addition, tourism system is expected to adequately capture tourism components and processes that would attract and or assist prospective tourists in search for desire information about tourist centres in the country and guide them in taking the right decision during their trip planning. Being an information intensive sector, it entails managing and analyzing an increasing quantity of information.

Various Components of Tourism

Research in Tunde, (2012) discussed the following various components of tourism:

(a). Natural beauty /Attraction:

Attractions such as amusement parks and these parks could be major source of employment. Large organizations such as Disney World, Disneyland, Six Flags, Europe - Park, Tivoli Gardens, and Sea World provide job opportunities, from top management jobs to clerical and maintenance jobs.

(b). Historical heritage:

Historic sites have always been popular attractions for both domestic and international travellers. In 2003, TIA released a report on historic/cultural travelers and over 81 percent of adults (118 million) who travelled in 2002 were considered historic/cultural travellers. Travellers tend to engage in multiple activities when they travel, 30 percent of the historic/cultural travellers said these activities were the primary motive for the trip.

(c). Transportation:

An increase in traffic may harm the environment if an area does not have the carrying capacity for tourists. Transportation planning must take economic, social, cultural, and natural resources costs into account when designing expanded facilities in tourism.

(d). Accommodation:

For successful tourism, accommodations must be available in sufficient quantity to match the demand of the travellers who arrive at the destination. Given access to the destination, accommodations should precede any other type of development; their importance cannot be overemphasized. Hotels vary tremendously in their physical facilities, level of maintenance and cleanliness, and services provided. Unless all of these factors are at satisfactory levels, tourism cannot succeed. The hotels must provide the physical facilities, price ranges, locations, and services that meet the expectations, wants, and needs of the travellers.

(e). Recreational facilities:

Tourism stimulates recreational values. It Provides tourist and recreational facilities that may be used by a local and urban population. Recreation attractions maintain and provide access to indoor and outdoor facilities where people can participate in sports and other recreational activities. Examples include swimming pools, bowling alleys, ice skating rinks, golf courses, ski resorts, hiking trails, bicycle paths, and marinas. To some tourist centres if the quality of facilities and services drop, demand will automatically fall off.

(f). Entertainment facilities:

The most satisfying entertainment for visitors is native to the area. In any country, there are expressions of the culture in the music, dance, drama, poetry, literature, motion pictures, television, ceremonies, festivals, exhibits, shows, meetings, food and beverage services, and tours (or local excursions) that portray the best the area has to offer. Not all forms of entertainment can be successfully described or illustrated in tourist promotional literature. One of the best ways to bring these entertainment opportunities to the attention of the visitor is with a social director whose desk is in the lobby of hotels, resorts, and other forms of accommodation so that the visitor can readily find out what is going on and make arrangements to attend.

(g). Employment opportunities:

The developments of infrastructural facilities create jobs for people. It is quite obvious in Nigeria that the tourism sector employs a large number of people providing a variety of jobs ranging from transportation to accommodation as the case may be. In other words, it provides job opportunities for the inhabitants to improve their standard of living (URS, 2007).

For a tourism centre to thrive, all these components must be accessible coupled with a mechanism that could promote the centre and its services, and to assist prospective tourist.

In planning their trip, however there are certain problems that bedevil the marketing of tourism centres thereby hampering customer patronage (Adora, 2010, WTTC, 2015). According to Ashikodi (2011); Abang (2010) and Olarewaju (2009), these problems include political instability, corruption, multiple taxation, inadequate infrastructure, poor standard of living, lack of transport and aviation safety, unskilled manpower, poor maintenance culture, development costs, financing costs and insecurity.

Impact of Tourism

The Socio-economic impact of tourism in any nation cannot be over emphasized. The economic impact of tourism includes incomes and wealth creation, increase in foreign exchange earning to provide investment that can finance economic growth. Economic impact of tourism could be in terms of investment and development.

Tourism enables one to meet people from different backgrounds, thereby creating understanding, peaceful co-existence, exchange of ideas, pleasantries and promote unity (Ogunberu, 2011). Tourism is a vital factor that can contribute to any country's economy. In fact, it can directly be stated that tourism has a connecting link with the cultural, social, economic and intellectual potentials of a nation and the current trends show that tourism is been acquired as one of the most profitable and fast-growing industries in the globe.

According to Adora (2010), tourism experts argue that tourism is a catalyst to economic development as it generates foreign exchange for the country. The income generated from the international tourists is an essential source of earnings from the economic point of view, as it encourages financial flow from other countries into another. In Nigeria, the Federal Government has opened the door for local and foreign investors to come and invest in the country's numerous tourism potentials. The country has designed her policy in such a way that it will favor the investors (Gbadebo and Adedeji, 2014; Felix and Usman, 2008).

Brief History of Tourism in Nigeria

According to Ekundayo and Yusuf (2014), Nigeria received the first set of Portuguese merchants to the country as far back in the year 1472. They arrived Nigeria with the motive of money making. In 1962, the development of tourism in Nigeria began as a body called "Nigerian Tourism Association" (NTA) was set up to promote tourism in the country. NTA later received the membership of the International Union of official travel organization (IUOTO) in the year 1964. The IUOTO was later renamed the World Tourism Organization (WTO). Nigerian government in 1971 appointed the service of the African Development Bank (ADB) to carry out a research on the potentials and viability of Tourism in the country. The research was positive and it shows that the potentiality is in Nigeria as Nigeria has all it takes to be a great tourist destination and for the development of tourism as an economic sector. The result of this research impelled the government to replace the NTA with the Nigerian Tourism Board (NTB). Nigerian Tourism Board was founded by a Decree No. 54 of 1976 and it comes into operation in the year 1978 (Olawajaju, 2009).

The Nigerian Tourism Board was authorized by the 1977 constitution to take charge of the following responsibilities: grading and classifying hotels in the country in such a way as may be prescribed, provide tourism information and advisory services, promote and undertake researches in tourism sector, enhancing the provision and improvement of tourist amenities and facilities in Nigeria, including ancillary facilities, and encourage people residing in Nigeria to take their holidays therein and people in abroad also to visit Nigeria. In 1989, the Federal Government of Nigeria started to regard tourism as an industry that needed to be developed haven seen the huge opportunity it possessed. In order to be a partaker in the huge opportunities possessed by tourism, several conferences were organized and hindrance of tourism development in the country were discussed at the seventh National Conference on Tourism held on March 15 1989 in Maiduguri, Bornu State. In the conference it was agreed that the operational capacity of the NTB need to be restructured and supported. As a result of the conference in 1989, the government gave his approval and the Ministry of Trade was reframed to become Ministry of Trade and Tourism, which led to the establishment of the department of Tourism in the Ministry (Ekundayo and Yusuf, 2014).

III. TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is one of the countries of the world blessed with many natural and human resources. The country is naturally endowed with wild range of nature which makes her one of the picturesque nations in the world. The country has a lot of tourist attractions waiting to be tapped. Nigeria, being a coastal country located along the South Atlantic Ocean has a wide range of beaches and other marine beauties. Nigeria is very rich in historical monuments, arts, sports, places of beauty, socio-cultural events, parks, museums, relaxation sites, waterfalls,

and resorts among others that can help her economy to grow (Rowland et al.,2015). There are about 142 tourist destinations spread across the 36 states of the Federation. Some of the tourist centers exist naturally, while others are manmade. Many of the tourist centres are possessed with attractive features, which were neither known nor patronized due to the fact that they are not easily reached to the world. Meanwhile, all these tourism potentials are enough to make Nigeria a good and well tantalizing tourism destination if there are adequate awareness and information that can properly guide prospective tourists.

Man-made attractions range from resorts, game reserves, parks, ranches, and others to mansion few. Cultural attractions like festival, carnivals and so on. The tourist attractions in the country are spread all over the states of the country. Every state that makes up the federation is blessed with one tourist attraction or the other. Some of the tourist centres in Nigeria are discussed below:

The first storey building in Nigeria.

Figure 1.1 shows the first storey building in Nigeria. It was built in 1842 by Rev Bernard Freeman and other missionaries to Nigeria.



Figure 1.1: The first storey building in Nigeria (Ekundayo and Yusuf, 2014).

Badagry Beach

This ancient town of Badagry was founded around 1425 A.D. Before its existence, people lived along the Coast of Gberefu and this area later gave birth to the town of Badagry. It is the second largest commercial town in Lagos State, located an hour from Lagos and half-hour from the Republic of Benin. The town of Badagry is bordered on the South by the Gulf of Guinea and surrounded by creeks, islands and a lake. The ancient town served mainly the Oyo Empire, which was comprised of Yoruba and Ogu people. Today, the Aworis and Eguns are mainly the people who reside in the town of Badagry. The name Badagry. Originated from the fact that the people of Badagry's means of livelihood are farming, fishing and salt making due to the availability of trees and presence of ocean respectively in the town. The natives believed that Badagry was founded by a famous farmer called Agbedeh who maintained a farm in the town. Agbedeh's farm brought about the word and Agbedegreme and its usage meaning is Agbedeh's farm. The word "Greme" meant farm in Ogu language. It was then coined

to Agbadagari by the Yoruba inhabitants and later corrupted to Badagry by the European slave merchants before the end of the seventeenth century.



Figure 1.2: Badagry beach (Ekundayo and Yusuf, 2014).

Kuramo Beach

Kuramo Beach is a sandy beach in Lagos, Nigeria, located at the south side of Victoria Island. Just like as the Lagos Bar beaches, it derives its name from the Kuramo Lake that borders it. This beach has over the years become a hot spot. It is home to various relaxation outlets that offer various types of services to visitors. Various seaside bars, soup kitchens, barbecue joints, etc. There are also a variety of musical shows and jamborees staged at one time or the other. Kuramo is a fertile place to unwind and relax. Below is a view of Kuramo Beach in Lagos).



Figure 1.3: Kuramo Beach (Victor, 2014).

4.4. Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls

Figure 1.4 shows the waterfall in Osun State of Nigeria called the Erin- Ijesha waterfalls. The waterfall has warm water which comes from the rock that meets with cold waterstream 100m below.



Figure 1.4: Erin-IjeshaWaterfalls (Victor, 2014).

Ikogosi Warm Spring

Ikogosi warm and cold spring is one of the wonders of nature. The warm spring flows down from a hilly setting and from another hilly landscape the cold spring rolls down and merges with the warm spring at the confluence. The entire scenery is captivating with the ever-green vegetation forming natural shelter where tourists can have some relaxation. The spring is located in Ekiti West Local Government Area of Ekiti State. It is an awesome site where two different springs flow side by side without disturbing each other: while one is cold, the other is warm and they maintain a temperature of about 37 degrees. The whole landscape in the area was beautified by green vegetation. The measurement of the whole area of the spring is about 32 hectares and it is prevented from erosion by tall evergreen trees in which these trees form a cover for relaxation of the tourists. Apart from being a resort for relaxation, it is claimed that the water also serves as a cure for some diseases in the body. (Godfrey and Clarke, 2003).



Figure 1.5: Ikogosi Warm Spring in Ekiti State (Victor,E. 2014)

Nigeria has a tourism potential to reckon with, but unfortunately the resources have never been adequately harnessed to meet up with the required standard. The development of tourism in Nigeria is a diverse project that needed attention from all the three tiers of government. Looking at the resources at hand such as good weather, beaches, monuments, historical sites and hospitable people, Nigeria should be leading the other African countries in the provision of tourism, however, the reverse is the case. Nevertheless, Nigeria is blessed with abundant tourism destinations which if properly managed, will compete favourably with the rest of the world (Victor, E.2014)

IV. FACTORS AFFECTING TOURISM IN NIGERIA

Safety and Security

According to Nadube (2017), safety and security are one of overall “five global forces that would drive the tourism industry in the new millennium.” For the consumers of tourism services, safety and security are probably part of the most important aspects. Security in the tourism sector has been an important issue in the past decades; however, it is getting more difficult to control due to the fact of economic growth and rising population (Hall., 2003). Bola, (2010), argue that every security incident such as war, civil unrest, terrorism or crime do not only have a negative effect on the targeted destination but also to the local community and its stakeholders. According to Hall *et al.*, (2003), risks in various forms are common especially in underdeveloped countries. Therefore, it is very important to tackle the risk factors in order to make our environment more attractive to tourists.

In Nigeria, National security, social-economic and political progresses are impeded by crimes, civil unrest and violent acts, especially the security concerns of the coastal region of the country which includes the Niger Delta area and recently the insurgencies in the North East of the country (Adora, 2010). Dambazau, (2007), argued

that there are three levels of security risk that faces Nigeria. The first level comes from the increased violent crimes, from simple robbery to armed robbery, hijacking and violent attacks, second is direct attack or blackmail, which include kidnapping for ransom and vandalizing of facilities, and the third is the incidence of inter-communal and religious clash. Plateau state, one of the 36 states in Nigeria is known as the tourist haven of Nigeria. The state is possessed with the following tourist attraction: waterfalls, lakes, game reserves, Wildlife Park. Unfortunately, ethnic and religious conflicts have turned the state into a state of unrest and killing (BBC, 2010).

Transportation

Majorly, in Nigeria we have land, water ways air and railway. All these are not really functioning well. Our roads are bad, the water ways are not too encouraging. There are four major international airports in Nigeria, namely Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja, Aminu Kano International Airport Kano, Muritala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos and Port Harcourt International Airport Port Harcourt (FAAN, 2010a). Major international airlines serving these airports include KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, British Airways, Lufthansa, Air France and Delta Airlines (Sule, 2010). Although local airlines have joined their foreign counterparts in the renewal of their fleets in recent years, yet Nigerian airlines remain crippled by lack of funds to finance and acquire aircrafts (Sule, 2010).

According to Fani-Kayode (2010), the deplorable state of the run-ways at the Nigeria airports makes landing and takeoff dangerous and impedes tourist frequent inflow to the country. The terminal buildings in the international airport are not in satisfactory condition, however the runways in Lagos and Port-Harcourt airports needs upgrading and repairs (FAAN, 2010b). Moreover, the road networks leading to some strategic tourism areas are in disrepair. The road networks comprise 193,200km, of which less than 30,000km are tiled.

The Nigerian rail network has suffered from lack of significant development over the years. The country has a network of 3,505km of narrow-gauge single-track lines, which cover nine of the thirty-six states of the country and these rail networks are virtually not usable. The state of the rail network single line from I do terminal in Lagos to Abeokuta city in Ogun state reveals a collapse of the rail line at the Agege Local Government inter change and that of others making rail connection from the Lagos state to the other part of the country difficult. Meanwhile, the rail system in the country presently is being improved upon by the present administration led by President Muhammad Buhari.

Human Resources Development

Generally, human resources capabilities in the tourism sectors are grossly lagging behind in terms of its quality, standard and skills delivery (Shaw and Williams, 2009): To deal with this issue, the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) was established in 1988 with about seven centres across the country (NIHOTOUR, 2010). The establishment of the institution was signed between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Federal Government of Nigeria (NIHOTOUR, 2010). The ILO served as the UNDP executing agency whilst the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation served as the implementing agency for the Nigerian government.

However, NIHOTOUR has been heavily criticized for its ineffectiveness as a provider of educational service. The courses presented by the institute have a tendency to focus on hotel and catering management with little or no emphasis on other sectors of the tourism industry. It has been observed that the Institute does not even have credible on-site practice facilities. I was privileged to sit in one of the lectures of the institute on the 3rd of July 2010 and observed that the training institute is ill equipped and badly maintained.

Monumental Structures

The lack of maintenance of monumental sites is a major constraint to tourism in Nigeria. Studies have shown that tourists to Nigeria want to visit historical and monumental sites, but most of these monuments are in a depleted state due to lack of maintenance. For example, the National Arts Theatre located at Iganmu in Lagos is the only of its type in Nigeria; it was commissioned in 1977 to host the Festival for Black Arts 1977. The National Theatre was a monument worth admiring then with its large exhibition hall; Art gallery; Crafts centre, cinema halls and restaurants. However, the theatre is presently in deplorable state, all the restaurants were not functioning, the exhibition hall is now closed, the car park overgrown by weeds. The toilets were not functioning and some parts of the theatre have been taken over by miscreants. Lack of maintenance and poor management has deprived the tourism sector of one of its greatest assets. The current deplorable state of these infrastructures is a strategic competitive disadvantage, and this will definitely lead to prospective tourists seeking their experience in other countries with better infrastructures. Another major challenge facing tourism development is erratic supply of electricity.

Lack of Awareness and Proper Information System

The issue of tourism information system in Nigeria is not new, but what is new is the quest for an intelligent mechanism that can adequately capture tourism components and processes, that could assist prospective tourists in search of desired information about tourist centres in the country and guide them in taking the right decision during their trip planning. Additionally, the body in charge of tourism in Nigeria has not created enough awareness to the public to promote the sector.

V. CONCLUSION

The evolution of tourism management system in Nigeria has been discussed in detail; several challenges that limit the growth of tourism in Nigeria are also highlighted. Several researchers have postulated and developed several models to aid tourism in Nigeria using technology. This review paper has been able to contribute to the limited literature that exists on the evolution and technological development of Tourism in Nigeria. This will serve as a theoretical background for other researchers that may aim to contribute to the development of tourism in Nigeria.

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