Creative Tourism and Business Development in Akwa Ibom State

Christabel D. Brownson

ABSTRACT

Creative Tourism is a new tourism opportunity that emphasizes the engagement between host and guests who are interested in actively participating in and learning from an authentic experience. It is the future of cultural tourism. Although it is considered as an escape route from the reproduction of cultural assets of tourism destination, contributing the preserve of original cultures and intangible heritage. A simple evaluation of the performance of the Nigerian Tourism industry reveals the absence of a tourism spirit among industry players and the lack of adequate visitor ready tourism products. Despite the low contribution of tourism to the national GDP of the Country, the Nigerian government has made several efforts and attempts to boost the industry with sporadic developments in some states of the country of which Akwa Ibom State is one of them. It is with this view that this study seeks to investigate Creative tourism and business development in Akwa Ibom State. Using a quantitative analysis, a total sample of 192 entrepreneurs were investigated. Findings revealed that Creative Tourism relates positively with business development in Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords: Creative Tourism, Creative Contents, Global Experience, Entrepreneurship, Business Development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism was called upon by the World Bank and United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to take place in national development of developing Countries [36]. Due to the importance and relevance of tourism, most developing countries are now promoting some brand of tourism tied to its development [37] and Nigeria is no exception. Unlike the oil distribution in the Country, which is centered in a region, tourism resources are spatially distributed in all the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. It is observed that every Local Government Area (L.G.A) in Nigeria has at least one tourism resources. A thorough resource inventory would show the huge potential of tourism in Nigeria. Experts believe that tourism can trigger the much needed socio-economic development in any country including Nigeria. Hence, tourism in Nigeria has the potential of being a supplementary source of revenue for the country if not the major source. It is in this regard that this study set out to investigate the link between creative tourism and the development of businesses in Nigeria specifically in Akwa Ibom State.

II. CREATIVE TOURISM

Creative tourism is defined in various ways such as a tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potentials through active participation in learning experiences which are the characteristics of the holiday

destination where they are undertaken [29]. It is travel directed towards an engaged and authentic experience with participative learning in the arts, heritage or special character of a place and it provides a connection with those who reside in the place and create this living [33]. Kesimoglu [17] asserted that it is a type of tourism that relies on creative resources and creative clusters and delivers creative experiences. Piscitelli [21] stated that it is a tourism that gives the possibility to develop own creative potential through experience linked to the culture of the places in many fields, such as cookery, painting, photography, crafts, and arts holidays. Cabeca et. al [7] claimed it is a type of tourism that develops the tourists' creativity through their active participation in experiences which are characteristics of their destination. Creative tourism is a step forward in cultural tourism and a catalyst of regional and local development [22]. It is an extension of cultural tourism in which consumers seek interactive and dynamic experiences [4]. Hull & Sassenberg [14] pointed out that it can be seen as a kind of transference of the past into the present and the future via the relationship between local community and tourists. It is a convergence of tourism and the creative economy generating knowledge based creative activities that link producers, consumers, and places by utilizing technology, talent, or skill to generate meaningful intangible cultural products, creative content and experiences [20]. Creative tourism concentrates on image, lifestyles, atmosphere, narratives, and media [25]. It centers around active learning experiences developed in a workshop or more formal learning setting [27] and provides visitors with learning experiences, as they sometimes create their personal souvenirs [5]. Creative tourism is increasingly being seen as a means of bringing people together to co-create and to forge new relationships [27]. According to Al-Ababneh [3], Creative tourism consist of a number of creative practices including the place, production and consumption. Marques [19] posited that it is a form of tourism based on experiences and the focus of touristic activity is on the experience itself more than on the service provider or tourist themselves and is also about living in and experiencing cultures different from the home culture of the visitor. Dekker and Tabbers [9] put forward that creative tourism implies that the ultimate goal is to let the tourist be part of the new surroundings of his or her destination. In other words, the tourist becomes part of the creative core of a destination that is, creative tourism involves the creative interactions of policy makers and producers. Since there is no consensus on a particular definition of creative culture, the following concepts can be seen in the above definitions which are considered the key elements of creative tourism:

- Active participation [29], [33], [7];
- Learning experiences/ authentic experience /creative experience [29], [33], [19], [5], [17], [20], [27], [4];
- Development of creative potentials/skills [29], [20],
- Creative content [9], [17], [20], [3];
- Utilizing Technology [17], [20].

Given the above key elements, this study adopts the factors that necessitate creative tourism such as application of skills [29], [20], [21]), absorbing global experience [29], [33], [17], [20], [4], utilizing technologies [17], [20] and creative content [9], [17], [20], [3].

A. Application of Skills

Richard and Wilson [30] suggested that the development of creative attractions require the acquisition of new skills on the part of the planners and those providing the attraction. As such, those currently employed in the tourism industry and/or the creative sector need to be able to develop the performative, interpretative and pedagogic skills required to stage and facilitate Creativity in Tourism. Remoaldo et al [22] cited that creative tourism gives tourists the opportunity to develop creative potential and skills by being actively involved in the creative processes. Richards [23] posited that, the current movement in society is towards 'skilled consumption', including education, self-development, and creative activities, which depends on developing individual skill and creativity. By developing a skill, people can also increase their level of challenge and therefore the excitement of the activity themselves. Richards [24] added that in creative tourism, the locals themselves become teachers guiding the tourist through their culture either through workshops, open ateliers, events, or cultural itineraries.

B. Absorbing Global Experience

The development of skills through consumption is also linked with a high level of involvement and absorption in the experience [23]. The idea that tourist as well as destination can be creative in their use of the basic building blocks of

tourism experience also opens up new perspectives on the nature of tourism itself. Creative tourism is a form of tourism based on experiences and the focus of touristic activity is on the experience itself more than on the service provider or the tourist themselves [19] and is also about living in and experiencing cultures different from the home culture of the visitor [9]. The conceptualization of the experience includes engaging the five senses in the development process and providing spaces and a flow of activities to allow for creative expression. The experience can then be enriched through cocreation and innovation of new experiences between tourists and locals [32]. Visitors wish to increasingly engage with first-hand genuine experiences, by using simple materials and imagination and even take home unique pieces which they made themselves [15]. Visitors exchange experiences and engage with local people and local culture and are part of the process of co-creation together with them [22]. Creative tourism experiences are not only economically valuable, but may stimulate the development of new ideas, and services through the interactions, conversations, and co-creation experiences that occur [8].

C. Utilizing Technology

New technologies now play an important role in the way people communicate and live a touristic experience. Technologies enhance the experience and make it easier for visitors to interact and communicate with local people while visiting a destination [30]. The development of new technologies has an impact on the way people appreciate art and the way they look unto other creative businesses. With continuous emergency of new technology, new forms of art expression arise [34]. New media technologies in the form of digital art works are presented within a screen-based electronic, virtual network or mobile domain enhancing the experience of the tourist [6]. New technologies are allowing people to locate creative activities to rural areas, and intangible heritage is becoming a more important aspect of tourism experiences [20].

D. Creative Content

Tourism now provides opportunities for tourist to be creative in their destination of stay. Country house hotel now offers add on creativities such as learning how to cook country style dishes, fishing, shooting, mystery weekends, riding (horse riding, car racing among others), playing games (tennis, basket balls, chess, scrabbles, golf), writing, music master classes and other forms of environmental art [30]. One cannot forget that the opportunity to develop creative potential makes competition among tourist destinations fierce due to the growing number of territories that try to compete for international tourists. This forces producers (private and public) to develop initiatives where imagination and fantasy play a relevant role while trying to adjust to tourists' demands [22]. Creative tourism experiences combine different creative content elements and engage with creative lifestyles. Visitors or consumers want to be actively involved in creative experiences and activities. Creative tourism consumers desire to "go where the creativity is" and to directly participate in creation and co-creation activities [28]. Destinations have to identify characteristic creative content and activities that connect with the needs of visitors and residents" [20].

III. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Business development is defined as the tasks and processes concerning the analytical preparation of potential growth opportunities and the support and monitoring of the implementation of growth opportunities. Tourism is believed to have economic benefits. It is shown to be one of the main factors for economic growth [24]. Creative tourism appears as a key option for development [22]. It is an important system to develop and empower the communities (ibid.). It can help to stimulate local economic, social and cultural development [23]. In Thailand, creative tourism is being used as a means of stimulating community-based tourism development [35]. The economic benefits of tourism lie in the purchasing power generation from revenue through the expenditure of visitors [13]. For example, in Nigeria, the economic impact of tourism on her national economy is estimated at \$280milloin or N36billion. Downstream impact from the "export" revenues of international tourist spending is estimated to generate additional gross revenue of \$224million or N29billion [1]. Tourism acts as catalyst for growth of trade and industry and increase in self-employment opportunities like establishing restaurant, kiosk, cybercafé among others which can facilitate livelihood fast more than formal employment [16]. Although there are several indicators of business developments such as increase balance of payment, increase in foreign exchange, and increase employment opportunities among others. This study will focus on employment opportunities.

A. Employment Opportunities

It is an opportunity to earn income. It is a means of selfrespect and provides an entitlement and command over goods and services. The development of tourism generates new direct and indirect job opportunities and a reduction of deficit in current account while generating more tax revenues for the government for the running of economic activities [2], [10], [18]. The sustained demand for travel and tourism, coupled with its ability to generate a high level of employment continue to prove the importance and value of the sector as a tool for job creation and economic development [11], [12]. Tourism and hospitality industries create many employment opportunities in different areas like accommodations, transportation, attraction sites among others.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD

Using a descriptive study with a purposive sampling method, 200 entrepreneurs who consisted of craft workers, art galleries makers, hotel owners, food vendors, computer operators, photographers among others were examined at tourist sites in Akwa Ibom State as shown on Table I below:

TABLE I: RESPONDENTS USED FOR THE STUDY						
S/N	Selected Tourist Centres	Number of Entrepreneurs				
1	Raffia City, Ikot Ekpene	57				
2	Ibeno Beach, Ibeno	55				
3	Uta Ewa Beach, Ikot Abasi	56				
4	Le Meridian Hotel Complex and Golf, Uyo	32				

TOTAL 200

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, only 192 were returned in useable form as such, 192 respondents' responses are used in analyzing the Data from the field work.

V. ANALYSIS

This study sought to examine creative tourism and business development. The below tables show the analysis of the study:

TABLE II: APPLICATION OF SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES						
S/N	N Application of Skills Extent of Agreement or Disagreement					ment
	and Employment Opportunities	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
1	Ability to add	103	76	6	7	192
	knowledge learnt	(54%)	(39%)	(3%)	(4%)	(100%)
	in the production					
	of art/craftwork					
	can bring about					
	more patronage					
	and in turn ensure					
	job opportunities					
2	Application of	66	114	8	4	192
	skill to products	(34.3%)	(59.3%)	(4.3%)	(2.1%)	(100%)
	and services aids					
	local content to					
	compete globally which brings					
	about job					
	opportunities					
3	Ability to apply	63	97	21	11 (6%)	192
	knowledge to	(33%)	(50%)	(11%)	(0,0)	(100%)
	complete a		, ,	, ,		
	specific task give					
	you edge over					
	others creating					
	more job					
	opportunities					

Table II above shows the analysis on application of skills and employment opportunities. The table indicates that in the first item on the application of skills and employment opportunities, 103 respondents representing 54% of the responses strongly agreed to the entrepreneur's ability to add knowledge they had learnt in the production of art/craftwork which can bring about more patronage from tourist ensuring that they create more job opportunities in the process. 76 respondents representing 39% agreed to the first item on the table while 6 respondents representing 3% of responses strongly disagreed as well as 7 respondents representing 4% of responses disagreed to the first item. On the second item on Table II, 66 respondents representing 34.3% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that application of skill to products and services aids local content to compete globally which brings about job opportunities. 114 respondents representing 59.3% of the responses agreed to the second item with 8 respondents representing 4.3% of the responses strongly disagreeing to the second while only 4 respondents representing 2.1% disagreed to the item. 63 respondents representing 33% of the responses strongly agreed to the third item on Table II which asserts that ability to apply knowledge to complete a specific task give you edge over others creating more job opportunities. 97 respondents representing 50% of the responses agreed to the third item, 21 respondents representing 11% strongly disagreed to the third item while only 11 respondents representing 6% of the responses disagreed to the assertion on the third item on _ Table II. On the whole, the above analysis indicates that there is a higher level of agreement that application of skills can aid generate employment opportunities

TABLE III: ABSORBING GLOBAL EXPERIENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

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	Absorbing Global	Ext	ent of Agre	ement or	Disagree	ement
S/N	Experience and Employment Opportunities	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
1	Applying what is done in another	113 (59%)	66 (34%)	5 (3%)	8 (4%)	192 (100%)
	country can promote business and as well create job opportunities					
2	Different practices such as cultural heritage, food and customs bring people to a	100 (52%)	80 (42%)	6 (3%)	6 (3%)	192 (100%)
	particular place thus generate employment opportunities					
3	Introduction of foreign goods/services can ensure tourist needs satisfied, increase patronage, and promote job opportunities	108 (56%)	74 (39%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	192 (100%)

Table III above shows the analysis on absorbing global experience and employment opportunities. The table indicates that in the first item on the application of skills and employment opportunities, 113 respondents representing 59% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that ability to apply what is done in another country can promote businesses as well as create job opportunities. 66 respondents representing 34% agreed to the first item on the table while 5 respondents representing 3% of responses strongly disagreed as well as 8 respondents representing 4% of responses disagreed to the first item. On the second item on Table III, 100 respondents representing 52% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that different practices such as cultural heritage, food and customs bring people to a particular place thus generate employment opportunities. 80 respondents representing 42% of the responses agreed to the second item with 6 respondents representing 3% of the responses strongly disagreeing to the second item while only 6 respondents representing 3% disagreed to the item. 108 respondents representing 56% of the responses strongly agreed to the third item on Table III which asserts that introduction of foreign goods/services can ensure tourist needs are satisfied, increase patronage, and promote job opportunities. 74 respondents representing 39% of the responses agreed to the third item, 6 respondents representing 3% strongly disagreed to the third item while only 4 respondents representing 2% of the responses disagreed to the assertion on the third item on Table III. On the whole, the above analysis indicates that there is a higher level of agreement that absorbing global experience can aid generate employment opportunities

TABLE IV: UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

	and Employment					Extent of Agreement or Disagreement			
	Opportunities	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL			
1	Utilization of emerging	98 (51%)	81 (42%)	8 (4%)	5 (3%)	192 (100%)			
<u>-</u>	technologies now brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in								
2	opportunities Technologies make it easier for visitors to interact,	88 (46%)	92 (48%)	8 (4%)	4 (2%)	192 (100%)			
	communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job								
3	Development of new technologies has an impact on how tourist appreciate our artwork thereby creating openings for	69 (36%)	94 (49%)	16 (8%)	13 (7%)	192 (100%)			
		brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in turn brings job opportunities 2 Technologies make it easier for visitors to interact, communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job opportunities 3 Development of new technologies has an impact on how tourist appreciate our artwork thereby	brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in turn brings job opportunities 2 Technologies make it easier for visitors to interact, communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job opportunities 3 Development of new opportunities 3 Development of new opportunities opportunities appreciate our artwork thereby creating openings for	brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in turn brings job opportunities 2 Technologies make it 88 92 easier for visitors to (46%) (48%) interact, communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job opportunities 3 Development of new 69 94 technologies has an impact on how tourist appreciate our artwork thereby creating openings for	brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in turn brings job opportunities 2 Technologies make it 88 92 8 easier for visitors to (46%) (48%) (4%) interact, communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job opportunities 3 Development of new 69 94 16 technologies has an impact on how tourist appreciate our artwork thereby creating openings for	brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in turn brings job opportunities 2 Technologies make it 88 92 8 4 easier for visitors to (46%) (48%) (4%) (2%) interact, communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job opportunities 3 Development of new 69 94 16 13 technologies has an (36%) (49%) (8%) (7%) impact on how tourist appreciate our artwork thereby creating openings for			

Table IV above shows the analysis on utilizing Technology and employment opportunities. The table indicates that in the first item on utilizing Technology and employment opportunities, 98 respondents representing 51% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that Utilization of emerging technologies now brings effectiveness and efficiency in art/craftwork production which in turn brings job opportunities. 81 respondents representing 42% agreed to the first item on the table while 8 respondents representing 4% of responses strongly disagreed as well as 5 respondents representing3% of responses disagreed to the first item. On the second item on Table IV, 88 respondents representing 46% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that Technologies make it easier for visitors to interact, communicate with local people and as well aid digital promotion of art/craftworks which create job opportunities. 92 respondents representing 48% of the responses agreed to the second item with 8 respondents representing 4% of the responses strongly disagreeing to the second while only 4 respondents representing 2% disagreed to the item. 69 respondents representing 36% of the responses strongly agreed to the third item on Table IV which asserts that Development of new technologies has an impact on how tourist appreciate our artwork thereby creating openings for more jobs. 94 respondents representing 49% of the responses agreed to the third item, 16 respondents representing 8% strongly disagreed to the third item while only 13 respondents representing 7% of the responses disagreed to the assertion on the third item on Table IV. On the whole, the above analysis indicates that there is a higher level of agreement that utilizing technology can aid generate employment opportunities

Creative contents and Extent of agreement or disag				disagree	greement	
S/N	employment opportunities	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
1	Awareness of	102	77	7	6	192
	innovative service	(53%)	(40%)	(4%)	(3%)	(100%)
	brings in different					
	group of people every					
	day thus encourages					
	business development					
	and job opportunities					
2	Using creative ideas,	82	98	10	2	192
	innovative strategy to	(43%)	(51%)	(5%)	(1%)	(100%)
	promote our business					
	attract more customers					
	thus encourages job					
	opportunities					
3	The introduction of	58	102	17	15	192
	creative content in	(30%)	(53%)	(9%)	(8%)	(100%)

tourism

tennis,

businesses

the

such learning how to play

writing

traditional

music master classes

and others, other than

art/craftwork creation

can connect local

tourist centres globally

thereby about job opportunities

TABLE V: CREATIVE CONTENTS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Table V above shows the analysis on creative contents and employment opportunities. The table indicates that in the first item on the creative contents and employment opportunities, 102 respondents representing 53% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that awareness of innovative service brings in different group of people every day thus encourages business development and job opportunities.77 respondents representing 40% agreed to the first item on the table while 7 respondents representing 4% of responses strongly disagreed as well as 6 respondents representing 3% of responses disagreed to the first item. On the second item on Table V, 82 respondents representing 43% of the responses strongly agreed to the assertion that Using creative ideas, innovative strategy to promote our business attract more customers thus encourages job opportunities. 98 respondents representing 51% of the responses agreed to the second item with 10 respondents representing 5% of the responses strongly disagreeing to the second while only 2 respondents representing 1% disagreed to the item. 58 respondents representing 30% of the responses strongly agreed to the third item on Table V which asserts that the introduction of creative content in tourism such as learning how to play tennis, writing or music master classes and others, other than the traditional businesses of art/craftwork creation can connect local tourist centers globally and thereby bring about job opportunities. 102 respondents representing 53% of the responses agreed to the third item, 17 respondents representing 9% strongly disagreed to the third item while only 15 respondents representing 8% of the responses disagreed to the assertion on the third item on Table V. On the whole, the above analysis indicates that there is a higher level of agreement that creative contents can aid generate employment opportunities.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study sought to examine Creative tourism and the development of businesses in Akwa Ibom State. From the analysis of the variables of creative tourism and business development above, the results found are discussed as follows:

A. Application of Skills and Employment Opportunities

The result of the analysis as seen on Table II indicated a higher level of agreement that application of skills can aid generate employment opportunities. This result aligns with the views of Richard and Wilson [30] who suggested that the development of creative attractions require the acquisition of new skills on the part of the planners and those providing the attraction. As such, those currently employed in the tourism industry and/or the creative sector need to be able to develop the performative, interpretative and pedagogic skills required to stage and facilitate Creativity in Tourism. The result also aligns with Richards [23] who posited that by developing a skill, people can also increase their level of challenge and therefore the excitement of the activity themselves. The result also hints that the locals with their acquired skills in crafts and other areas are fit to teach and guide the tourist in their chosen field according to Richards [24].

B. Absorbing Global Experience and Employment **Opportunities**

The result of the analysis as seen on Table III indicated a higher level of agreement that absorbing global experience can aid generate employment opportunities. The result aligns with the idea that creative tourism is about living in and experiencing cultures different from the home culture of the visitor [9] as the entrepreneurs' exhibit both local and foreign products/services and attractions which from their responses attract more patronage from tourist as well as aiding to generate employment opportunities. The provision of different cultural heritage, foods and other services help to engage some of the five senses of the tourist in terms of sight, touch and taste which aligns with Wiyana et al [35]'s conceptualization of the experience. The use of foreign products by the entrepreneurs shows their interaction with visitors over the years which indicated a sort of exchange of experiences [22] and ideas which had led to the development of such foreign products due to interactions, conversations and co-creation experiences that occurred [8].

C. Utilizing Technology and Employment Opportunities

The result of the analysis as shown on Table IV indicated that that there is a higher level of agreement that utilizing technology can aid generate employment opportunities. The result aligns with the fact that technologies enhance the experience and make it easier for visitors to interact and communicate with local people while visiting a destination [30], [6]. The result also aligns with the idea that new technologies have an impact on the way people appreciate art and the way they look unto other creative businesses [34].

D. Creative Content and Employment Opportunities

The result of the analysis on Table V shows that there is a high level of agreement that creative content can aid in the generation of employment opportunities. The result agrees

with the views of Richards and Wilson [30], OECD [20] and Richards [28] in that awareness of innovative services bring in people to the tourism site that is, 'consumers desire to go where the creativity is' [28] and such creative services attract global visitors to the tourist site with the locals who show case such creativity [20] hence, different creative activities such as cooking country style dishes, playing tennis, fishing, music writing among others are learnt and taught. Tourism now provides opportunities for tourist to be creative in their destination of stay -creatively [30].

VII. CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the link between creative tourism and business development in Akwa Ibom State with investigations carried out in 4 major tourist sites in the State. The results indicated very highly level of positive agreement that the variables of creative tourism such as application of skills, absorbing global experience, utilizing technologies and the use of creative contents does aid in the development of businesses in the state especially in the area of generating employment opportunities for local entrepreneurs. The results of the study are supported by extant literature as discussed in the discussion of findings. These shows that the government should develop more tourist sites in the State to help those who have acquired skills to utilize the opportunities provided by the tourist sites to display their creative products and services which will in turn attract patronage from visitors to the site enabling them to be gainfully employed, generate employment for others and contribute to the overall business development in the State. Future studies can investigate further in this area with the focus on the visitors to the tourist site. This can help understand further if their engagement with the activities of the providers of tourist attractions and services at the tourist site has helped in enhancing their skill development in local craft/culture, in enhancing their experiences among other variables.

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