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CULTURAL FESTIVALS AND INCOME GENERATION IN IKWERRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

Anwuri, Patience Nwokaego (Ph.D)

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences,
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. **Email:** patience.anwuri@uniport.edu.ng

Osuoha, Ifeanyi Jude

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Faculty of Agriculture,
Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. **Email:** Rotr.Jude@gmail.com

Corresponding author: *Anwuri, Patience Nwokaego
Email: patience.anwuri@uniport.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study examined the correlates between cultural festivals and income generation in Ikwerre Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study were to; 1. Determine the relationship between cultural festivals and job creation, 2. Ascertain the relationship between cultural festivals and infrastructural development. The descriptive survey research design adopted the use of questionnaires as the main instrument for primary data collection. The population of the study was very large and unknown. The sample size of 300 was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size determination from an infinite population. The questionnaire was administered to the residents of two communities (Aluu and Choba) in Ikwerre LGA, Rivers State. The questionnaire was validated through the face and, content validity. The internal consistency of the instrument was excellent (.716) using Chronbach Alpha. The statistical tool for data analyses was Pearson Correlation. Major findings showed that festivals had a positive and significant relationship with job creation and infrastructural development in Ikwerre LGA, Rivers State. The study concluded that Ikwerre cultural festival has demonstrated that tourism is a significant major player in job creation and infrastructural development. It was therefore recommended that stakeholders should embrace tourism marketing to enhance the profitability of cultural festivals.

KEYWORDS

Cultural festival, wellbeing, job creation, income generation, infrastructure development.



INTRODUCTION

Cultural festivals seem to be ubiquitous in modern societies, filling the social calendar and the cultural agenda with a vast array of events, happenings, and spectacles. Festivals help in the sustenance of cultural heritage of the people and also a means of promoting local pride, identity, and income. The broadening role of traditional and popular cultural events has attracted criticism from those who argue that the cultural content of festivals is being de-valued, and from those who fear that the local culture of the people is being replaced by a more globalized version. The socio-economic importance of culture has engendered the processes of commodification of culture through cultural tourism which helps to avoid loss of identity and meaning. In the eyes of many, therefore, the “local” loses its “authenticity” as a result of globalisation and modernisation, while the market economy gains from the tourism spin-off (de Bres & Davis 2001). Such debates proves the essence of festivals as contested fields of meaning (Quinn, 2003), in situations where stakeholders takes advantage of the symbolic capital of the events.

In Cross River State, cultural festivals is playing significant role in promoting cultural tourism. The Ikwerre cultural festival is one important component mix of the Cross River tourism industry which attracts tourists across the world (Ukwayi, Ojong & Augustine, 2012; Attah, Agba, & Nkpoyen, 2013). The cultural festival is an annual event that has the potentials of contributing significantly to the wellbeing of the host community. A festival includes colourful masquerades, indigenous music and dance, and entertaining band processions (Esu, Arrey, Basil & Eyo, 2011; Agba, Ikoh, Bassey & Ushie, 2010). The festival is developed to have the potentials of becoming the major driver of the Cross River State economy (Achonwa, 2007; Ingwe, Agba & Ndum, 2014). Ikwerre cultural festival is capable of weaning Rivers State of dependence on the monthly federal allocations and also providing a viable means of income for individuals engaged in tourism related business (Achonwa, 2007). The festival is as old as the Ikwerre L.G.A, but was popularised and was given international recognition by Governor Donald Duke of Rivers State in 2004 (Odere, 2015; Attah, Agba, & Nkpoyen, 2013). Since then, the socio-economic consequences of the festival have attracted remarkable research and debates. However, investigations on the effect of the festival on the wellbeing of the Ikwerre people (the immediate host community) have received lease consideration.

Viviers (2014) found that cultural festivals can affect significantly the lives of host communities if the residents are enthusiastic about festivals happening in their localities. Events such as festivals are becoming alternative tourist attractions globally due to change of tourist tastes. Small, Edwards & Sheridan, (2005) observed that past studies have focussed on measuring the economic effect of cultural festivals and event tourism. UNEP (2013) noted that cultural festivals can be a source of tourist attraction to culture tourists, and this can promote exchange of culture between tourists and local communities. A study by Delamere (2013) on event festivals, found out that event festivals have a significant contribution by creating a positive cultural effect in the community. Several studies have pointed to inconsistent and limited findings on influences of cultural and event tourism and their effect on job creation and social economic development, as well as local communities lacking awareness on the importance of event or cultural tourism (Ayeni and Ebohon (2013), Yasarata (2010) and Igbojekwe, *et al.*, 2014).

Most of the studies focus on economic contribution of cultural festivals to host communities, factors that affect cultural festivals as tourism attraction and in general, factors influencing event tourism

development. There is limited literature on contribution of cultural festivals to income generation and therefore this study sought to fill this gap in literature by determining the relationship between cultural festivals and income generation in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural festival and income generation

Cross River State earns much income from influx of tourists during the period of the festivals, as more hard currency flows into a state, the more development and generated income the state and its people can boost of (Etefia, 2014; Agba, Mbotto& Agba, 2013). The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (2014), reported that the cultural festivals if properly harnessed can pull imaginable revenue for the country and enhance tourism, but unfortunately, not much has been done to convert these assets into economic wealth (Nico, 2014). They also asserted that the cultural festival has the charity dimension and highlighted activities geared towards generating money for the under privilege in the state. Thus, it is a veritable source of income, as the state makes its highest internally generated revenue during the festival.

Gray (2008) affirmed that the cost of the cultural festival is often not evident from the festival goers' perspective. These include organization, security and policing, traffic control, medical treatment, water requirements, clean-up and damage to public property. The key to a successful festival is to create finances to assist cities and towns in providing these social services. (Natario, 2014). Festival organizers have an assortment of potential funds to tap into providing payment to local government units for services (Getz. 2001). Entrance fees, fees for exhibitors' individual and corporate gifts and markets promotional fees, all provide revenue generation for the State (CRTB, 2008).

Natario (2014) asserted that cultural is among the largest income-generating festival in the world and a reliable source to stimulate sustainable economic opportunities for small and medium-size business. According to Coffrey (2012), the cultural festival provides training for the local traders in hospitality, financial management and development of local trade initiatives, to maximize income generated from the increased trading activities. Through investing in the festival, greater income generation opportunities are enhanced.

Theoretical Foundations

Unbalanced growth theory

The theory of unbalanced growth was popularized by Albert Otto Hirschmann (Jhingan, 2006). This theory is a direct opposite of the doctrine of balanced growth theory by Ragnar Nurkse. The unbalanced growth theory is of the view that investments aimed at economic growth and development should be made in carefully selected sectors instead of doing so in all than sectors of the economy simultaneously. It is argued that underdeveloped countries do not possess sufficient capital and other resources to enable rapid development at the same time. Revenues generated from already developed sectors could be utilized for the development of other sectors. Thus, the economy gradually moves from the path of unbalanced growth to that of balanced. The theory contends that deliberate unbalancing of the economy; the pre-designed strategy is the best way to achieve economic growth in underdeveloped country.

The theory has relevance for the present study especially here in Rivers State with lack of incentives for people or capital to engage in new enterprise. Also with little or no manpower for rapid growth. Development could successfully strife if investment pattern is induced in one sector like what is being

practised with the cultural festival. Based on the study, cultural festival enhances cultural tourism which can boost ecotourism as well as agricultural sector.

Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

Cultural festival and job creation

The economic role of cultural festival is based on the fact that they act as catalyst for attracting visitors and increasing average spending and length of stay in the destination. The festival/cultural contributes to the income generation and prosperity of the destination (Agba, Mbotto& Agba, 2013). This is because; it generates new employment opportunities (Prentice & Anderson, 2003). There is an agreement among experts that festivals bring about the emergence of small and medium size enterprises in tourism destinations (Bachlestiner& Zins, 2009). The benefits of cultural festival include provision of community facilities, job creation and the promotion of the area for tourism (Hall, 2004). Cultural festival creates employment and business opportunities for both local community and tourism investors (Compton & Love, 205). According to Falassi(2009), cultural festival is an industry that is labour intensive; it has great potential in creating employment opportunities, particularly in Rivers State.

In Bangladesh, Jahan and Amin (2014) found that tourism provided opportunities for employment of people.

In Nigeria, Okpoko (2010) observed that festivals hold great promise for tourism". Festivals attract as much tourists as fixed cultural attractions. Emphasizing more on the role of festival in tourism development, Okpoko argued that African countries like Nigeria have cultural festivals that are rich in mythology, could harness to generate revenue. Snowball, (2008) analyzed the case of Petronio Álvarez Pacific Music Festival held in Cali (Colombia),and observed that the music festival leads to the creation of income and employment for the city and personal benefits.

In Cross River State, Dimmock and Tiyce (2011) revealed that festivals have become instruments for destination development in most countries with great tourism potentials.

According to Hall (2004), economic impact of event is the total amount of additional expenditure generated within a city that can be directly or indirectly attributed to the staging of a major event. This implies that events such as the cultural festival to a large extent influence socioeconomic development such as job creation. Furthermore, Lindberg (1996) economic impact studies focuses on the changes that take place in sales, income, jobs and other parameters generated by economic events and concluded that the aim of every economic activities is to generate substantial revenue for the state. As reported by Achonowa (2007), investment in tourism has brought about income generation activities such as job creation for its increasing population. The cultural festival has an immense socio-economic benefit for the host community. The event over time has been perceived to be a high revenue earner for the state as well as creating thousands of job to tackle the issue of unemployment in the state and the nation. This is reflected in the fact that the potential of the event is transformed into sources of economic empowerment and job creation for the people.

From the foregoing it was hypothesized that:

H1: There is significant relationship between cultural festival and job creation in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Cultural festival and infrastructure development

Dominic (2011) observed that the Cross River State government through the cultural festival have ensured the provision of basic infrastructure facilities; namely roads, water, electricity, communications and hotels to cater for tourist. Thus, the provision of the basic social infrastructures like roads, recreational facilities, schools, hospitals, power, water supply and communication facilities, enhances high standard of living and improve community life among Ikwerre people as well as promote sustainable development in Cross River State (Ottong& Bassey, 2009).

Greve and Hodge (2005) in their study on public private partnerships, looking at the Australian experience doted that, organizations of the cultural festivals have helped developed infrastructures system in the state. They reported that a developed infrastructure system improves production capacity of the state, and also creates positive impacts on the overall economic performance. However, it is increasingly clear that the Rivers State cannot provide all the funds needed to finance and maintain infrastructure. This call for private sector participation to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the infrastructure which is of central importance to attain social and economic stability (Moran, 2006). The cultural events have triggered off a lot of development of the economy in terms of expansion in hotels, guest houses, facilities have been put on ground such as the Christmas Village etc. to make the cultural more attractive; existing facilities has been restructured and new ones erected with higher standard to meet the demands of future event in the state. The cultural festivals activities in Rivers State enhance the facilities to boost the tourism industry and accommodate tourists and visitors during the event.

From the foregoing it was hypothesised that:

H2: There is significant relationship between cultural festival and infrastructure development in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design, which allows for the use of questionnaire as the major instrument for data collection. The population consisted of residents of two communities in Ikwerre Local Government Area: Aluu and CHOBA. A sample size of three hundred (300) *determined using Cochran's formula for sample size determination from an infinite population.* The respondents were selected using convenience sampling method which is cost efficient. Information was gathered via structured questionnaire administered to 300 respondents. The instrument was made up of two sections: section A focused on respondents' demographic profile, while section B on the main research variables which are cultural festivals, job creation, and infrastructure development with 4 items each with 5-point likert scale. Information gathered was analysed using Pearson product moment correlation. The internal consistency of the instrument was excellent (.716) using Chronbach Alpha. The analysis was done based on the two hypotheses that guided the study. Data analysis was conducted with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) at 0.05 level of significance.

Bivariate Analysis

Results

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between cultural festival and job creation in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State

Table 1: Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between Ikwerre cultural festival and job creation

		Correlations	
		Cultural Festival	Job Creation
Cultural Festival	Pearson Correlation	1	.352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Job Creation	Pearson Correlation	.352**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation analysis was used for data analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. The correlation coefficient (r)=0.352 indicates that a weak relationship exist between cultural tourism and job creation. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient is an indication that a direct relationship between cultural tourism and job creation the probability value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance indicating that cultural tourism has significant relationship job creation. Accordingly, hypothesis one is supported.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between cultural festival and infrastructure development in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 2: Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between Ikwerre cultural festival and infrastructure development

		Correlations	
		Cultural Festival	Infrastructural Development
Cultural Festival	Pearson Correlation	1	.545
	Sig. (2-tailed)		-.045
	N	300	300
Infrastructural Development	Pearson Correlation	.545	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.045	
	N	300	300

Pearson correlation analysis was used for data analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. The correlation coefficient (r)=0.545 indicates that a moderate relationship exist between cultural tourism and infrastructural development in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient is an indication that a direct relationship between cultural tourism and infrastructural development the probability value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance indicating that cultural tourism has significant relationship infrastructural development. Accordingly, hypothesis two is supported.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis one showed that the hypothesis was supported. This means that the Ikwerre cultural festival has significant relationship with job creation among Ikwerre people of Rivers State. This finding is in agreement with the Okpoko (2010).

Findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis two revealed that the hypothesis was supported. This signifies that there is significant relationship between Ikwerre cultural festival and infrastructure development within the local government area. The finding is in agreement with

Dominic (2011) that infrastructure development has in recent times assumes a central importance in Nigeria's fight to attain social and economic stability. This situation brings to the fore the need for Rivers State Government to spend on festivals to drive infrastructure development. Thus the provision of the basic social infrastructure like roads, recreational facilities, schools, hospitals, power, water supply and communication facilities, enhances high standard of living which will improve community life as well as promote sustainable development in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Ikwerre cultural festival has demonstrated that tourism is a significant major player in job creation and infrastructural development. It is instrumental in changing the socio-economic wellbeing and fortune of host communities. It is a catalyst that fast tract economic diversification and enhance wellbeing of society. However, the expenditure in running the festival is high and is mostly shouldered by the Rivers State government.

Recommendations

Based on the findings if this study, it is recommended that the various stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry should embark on tourism marketing to enable them attract more visitors/tourists to their communities during these cultural events.

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