



E-MARKETING OF CULTURAL FESTIVAL AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the relationship between e-marketing of cultural festivals and tourism development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Two objectives and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Co relational research design was adopted and questionnaires were administered to employees at the State Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Descriptive statistics and linear regression analysis were utilized for statistical analyses. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festivals and tourism product development and revenue generation respectively in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study concluded that e-marketing is an internet-based marketing approach that promotes and advertise cultural festival to draw the attention of the target market to time, date, and venue of the cultural festival. It is recommended that the government should create an active website of the cultural festival page for tourism development on major social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, and so on; that the state's tourism bureau should explore and use different options (web sites, emails, web advertising) to contact both potential and current to keep them updated, communicate with travel agencies and publicize on different web pages, among other things; that the tourism bureau should employ the services of a social media expert with depth knowledge of marketing and that a periodic report should be sent to the Tourism Bureau on the trend of site visitation as this would help the Marketing Manager to enhance his e-marketing strategy.

KEYWORDS

E-Marketing, Cultural Festival, Tourism Development, Tourism Marketing.



INTRODUCTION

The cultural festival is a means of facilitating tourism. Tourism is a leisure activity, which involves transferring people to various destinations away from their usual products. This was institutionalized with the introduction of regular and seasonal holidays, which in relation to the availability of cultural festivals during the holidays. Then, the need for e-market cultural festival becomes very necessary, because it affects the tourist attraction in the country. Therefore, e-marketing, otherwise known as e-marketing, refers to conducting cultural festival marketing over the Internet. E-marketing improves is the process of marketing a cultural festival brand (company, product or service) using the Internet through computers and mobile devices. By this definition, e-marketing encompasses all the activities of a business through the World Wide Web in order to attract new businesses, maintain the current business and develop the identity of its brand.

In Nigeria, cultural festivals have attracted tourism development, which has contributed tremendously to economic growth with a variety of opportunities, including job opportunities, improved brand image, income generation and balance of payments deficit, strengthening of Gross Domestic Products and the growth of the nation (Egbaji, 2007). Global Development Indices (2002) reported in Esu, Arrey, Basil and Eyo (2011) indicate that the increase in tourism demand in Nigeria will be \$ 3.30 million (US), representing 7.70 percent of its share global market and its contribution to job creation at 6.40 per cent in the national economy per year between 2006 and 2015. It is also important to note that Nigeria ranks 141st in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. Therefore, it is obvious that to the extent that tourism has a growing potential and is important for the socio-cultural and economic development of Nigeria, there is a need to improve the effectiveness of e-tourism marketing in the country.

Nigeria has a variety of cultural festivals from every culture. Festivals are considered to have a significant impact on cultural and economic development, which can have a significant impact on the development of event tourism, especially in host communities. The festival organizers use event tourism to express the relationship between identity and place and play an important role in the consciousness of the citizens. Festivals are an important expression of human activity and contribute to the social and cultural life of their host communities (Raj & Vignali, 2013).

Cultural festival tourism (or cultural tourism) is the subset of tourism related to the culture of a country or region, specifically the way of life of the people in these geographical areas, the history of these people and their architecture, religion(s) and other elements that helped shape their way of life. It may also include tourism in rural areas that showcases the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (ie festivals, rituals) and their values and way of life, as well as places such as industrial tourism and creative tourism. It is generally accepted that cultural tourists spend significantly more than regular tourists and it was found that they do not affect the development of event tourism in Nigeria (Richards, 2016).

Culturally, tourism can enhance community enrichment. This is attributed to the meeting of different cultures Adora, (2013) Also, tourism can contribute positively to the preservation of the natural environment by protecting, preserving national parks and other protected areas (Okonkwo & Odum, 2014). Festivals are considered to have a significant impact on cultural and economic development, which can have a significant impact on the development of event tourism, especially in host communities. The festival organizers use event tourism to express the relationship between identity and place and play an important role in the consciousness of the citizens. Festivals are an important expression of human activity and contribute to the social and cultural life of their host communities (Raj & Vignali, 2013).

Cross-cultural e-marketing promotion in Cross Nigeria is gaining popularity in Nigeria, where various creative products are being developed. The state is known for its festival activities that include songs, dances and masquerades during coronations, weddings, funerals, naming, planting and harvesting ceremonies. Cross River State is decorated with its hospitality and cuisine, and so many Nigerians would love to have a Calabar dining experience. Tourists also enjoy visiting the numerous festivals, cultural and historical sites in Cross River State, while these ceremonies, tourism opportunities and locations have always been present with the residents of

Cross River State in Nigeria, little was done to formalize and organize their presentation to a variety of international audiences until 1999.

The state is characterized by cultural festivals and artistic practices that make the public visit the states for tourism. There is mountain tourism and recreation in the mountainous region of Obudu; there are new yam festivals in the rural area; virgin outings, water sports and other art-related events in many communities across the state. According to the tourist calendar, the month of December is full of deliberately full of festive activities, most of which take place in the state capital. Two important activities - the Calabar Festival and the Carnival Calabar have a prominent place in this period of celebration every year.

Therefore, this paper is particularly interested in identifying the causal implications of e-marketing of cultural festivals and tourist development in Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objective includes;

- 1) To determine the relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and tourism product development in Nigeria.
- 2) To ascertain the relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and revenue generation in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and tourism product development in Nigeria.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and revenue generation in Nigeria?

Literature review

Tourism e-Marketing

As mentioned earlier, tourism occurs when an individual (or group) leaves their normal environment where they live and work to go to another environment to engage in touristic activities there, regardless of the proximity of the desired location. Many tourists choose their destinations based on their marketing efforts. That is, these destinations must have been promoted to raise tourist awareness. Individuals, companies and tourism organizations typically promote these destinations / activities through social media, and the internet (Johnson, 2015).

According to Johnson (2015), e-tourism marketing has distinctive features from other marketing plans. As tourists are temporary, they are exposed to the goods and services of an area in a short time. Due to the fact that tourists rely on having a good time, it is important that e-tourism marketing includes marketing strategies that capture emotions, such as dealing with children with a recognizable experience. Egbaji (2007) noted that e-tourism marketing uses strategic marketing that involves a process of analyzing market opportunities and selecting such programs that could support sustainable business choices of tourism stakeholders through online promotion. In order to achieve the goal of successful e-commerce of existing tourism products, forecasting methods must be used. For example, when forecasting demand for tourist services, one must first measure the existing demand, as well as the number of holiday visits made, the trend for such trips and the level of pressure on the various tourist facilities provided at the destination. Next, these data should be analyzed in terms of geographical area or market sector also taking into account the estimate of the total market (tourists) and the proportion expected in the future (Egbaji, 2007).

The Internet and Tourism

Nyheim, McFadden and Connolly (2005) defined the Internet as a network that connects many networks and users around the world and a network that no one fully owns. The terms Web and Internet have often been used interchangeably. However, the Web is part of the Internet as a means of communicating with the Internet (Nyheim et al., 2005). In addition, the terms Internet and Information Communication Technology (ICT) are often used interchangeably. Strictly speaking, however, the Internet is part of ICT (Buhalis & Jun, 2011).

Today's traveller can virtually navigate to destinations at the touch of a finger, communicate with distant islands on their way to the office, and plan personalized adventures through simple online platforms. Failing to connect and capture this virtual audience, many tourism businesses are waging a difficult marketing battle for the money of tourists (Solimar International, 2015). Internet marketing - often referred to as internet marketing or e-marketing - is essentially any marketing activity conducted online through the use of Internet technologies. It includes not only advertising on websites, but also other types of online activities such as email and social networking. Every aspect of internet marketing is digital, meaning that it is electronic information transmitted to a computer or similar device, although of course it can also be linked to traditional offline advertising and sales (Jones, Malczyk & Beneke, 2011). Given that tourism is such a huge catalyst for growth, it is advisable that the Nigerian Tourism State's tourism hub be constantly imprinted in the minds of potential and existing tourists through internet marketing.

It is true that before the consumers of a tourist product choose their destinations, the festival they will visit or other tourist attractions, they seek opinions from several sources and it may be very useful for them to get information from the state tourism office. However, not all tourists (especially non-residents of River State) can access the office to receive information or comment, and this can create a gap between destinations and the potential tourist (Ufot, 2013). Without the right combination of tourism marketing strategies, tools and technology, travel and tourism businesses will not be able to find potential customers, and more importantly, these potential customers will not be able to find them. Therefore, a successful tourism business requires a brand that speaks to its target markets, content that successfully generates potential customers, and a level of service that listens to customer demands, all with budget constraints (Solimar International, 2015).

Today the Internet is one of the most effective communication, information and promotion tools. This promotional channel is designed to inform potential visitors about the tourism products on offer, sharing with them the most attractive and innovative features. Therefore, it is usually integrated into distribution and involves communication activities, including advertising. Along with customer loyalty, "unstructured" media are the most affordable, offering higher returns for small businesses at a lower cost. Therefore, "invest in quality and save on advertising" is definitely the motto (International Labor Office, 2012). This word-of-mouth strategy can be done over the Internet using various social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, websites, blog posts and so on. On the other hand, it is important to remember that a larger percentage of young tourists plan and organize their own trips, thanks to the wide availability of information via the internet. Through internet marketing, the state can raise awareness about its tourism products, increase its market, gain traffic from specialized chats through social networking sites, web chats, groups and blog comments, and thus enhance its tourism brand. In addition, internet marketing serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for the state to implement tourism marketing campaigns, as it is accessible to anyone with access to the Internet (Ufot, 2013). Therefore, the Internet is a real tool for raising awareness and protecting tourism products.

The Calabar Festival

The Calabar Festival usually started as a Christmas festival and initially, the festivities at the festival were similar to the Christmas celebrations elsewhere in Christendom to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, but with a traditional African touch - a traditional masquerade and masquerade food and drink. The Christmas celebration culminates on December 24, 25 and 26. At Calabar, a variety of indigenous masquerades such as Ekpe, Nnabo, Tinkoriko, Okpo and dances such as Abang and Ekombi appear around the Bassey Duke Effigy near Watt Market, Eleven-Eleven and many other locations in the city. But in 1999, the celebration took on a dramatic form. It was the turn of a new millennium and the new political administration in the state, led by Governor Donald Duke, decided to make Christmas an international festival sponsored by the state and other stakeholders. Fireworks heralded the beginning of a new millennium in the city of Calabar and throughout the state. A Christmas tradition with charms and performances had begun and was getting better every year.

The city of Calabar wears a different look during the festival. Every part of the city is decorated for the festival. The most impressive element of the decoration is the lighting. The large roundabouts and electricity poles on each major street are creatively decorated with special Christmas lighting. The lights are hung on metal wires in

various designs with spaced multi-colored bulbs. Patterned designs include floral patterns, angles, multi-pointed stars, Christmas bells, geometric shapes and more. Some have the traditional image of Santa Claus as part of the design. The focus of the Christmas lights is the huge construction at the CBN roundabout near Millennium Park. The structure is built as a set, covered with a special fabric and illuminated with tiny colorful lamps. The Millennium Park itself is also beautifully lit and houses a giant Christmas tree with special lighting accessories. Light patterns are said to have meaning and value for those who share the Christian faith. A large Nigerian flag recognized as the largest flag in Africa flies in a prominent position in the center of the park at a height of about 70 feet. As part of the decoration, festive messages and wishes are printed on rubber materials and panels and displayed along the main streets to create a panoramic visual delight. The Calabar Festival concludes with the cross overnight on December 31 and a New Year's Thanksgiving service on January 1 held at various churches.

From the script presented, the Calabar Festival offers what can be described as a complete menu in the field of attraction, as it is one of the five elements of the tourism industry classified by Middleton and Clarke (2008: 11). The other areas - accommodation, transportation, travel and destination organization are also provided by the Tourism Development Office to support the attraction sector.

Tourism development

Tourism development could be described as a process involving the establishing and maintaining the tourism industry in a particular destination/location. This involves series of planning and coordination with several stakeholders since tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon. When viewed through the prism of strategic management, tourism development connotes the process of crafting strategies and plans to enhance/establish tourism at a chosen destination. This implies that a well conceived and implemented tourism development plans will engender tourist satisfaction through the provision of memorable touristic experiences. When this is achieved, it will enhance positive tourists' behavioural intentions such as revisit intentions and behavioural destination loyalty. This current study views tourism development in the context of packaging the cultural tourism resources in Cross River State as a consumable tourism product and the economic development of the destination through revenue generation in Cross River State.

Empirical Analysis

Odigbo, Ogbu, and Alfred, (2015) understudy the assessment of the internet as tool for tourism marketing in Nigeria. Among their findings were that the website marketing did not have any significant relationship on the level of awareness of tourism products in Cross River State. They also noted that social media marketing did not significantly affect the level of patronage of tourism products in Cross River State. They recommended that the website and other internet tools should be efficiently handled preferably by experts to generate and maintain interest and level of patronage of Cross River State's tourism products.

Olugbamila, Omole, Omosulu, Soyinka, Odeyale, Olufayo and Akinrinmade (2012) did a study on marketing the tourism potentials of Owo community for the development of Ondo State, Nigeria. Their results show that the level of patronage of tourism potentials in Owo is relatively high as revealed by the data collected. Their study concluded that tourism potentials in Owo community has high patronage and has positive impact on people's socio-economic lives, but there are many challenges facing the sector in the study area. Some of the challenges are lack of accommodation, lack of awareness, inadequate water supply, lack of support by both Local and State governments for both *Igogo* and *Ero* festivals. They recommended the proper funding of *Owo Museum* by the federal government as well as appropriate packaging and marketing of *Igogo* and *Ero* festivals to meet international standards among other recommendations.

Esekong and Ibok (2011) researched on 'promoting culture and tourism in Nigeria through Calabar festival and *Carnival Calabar*.' Their paper analysed the structures and dimensions of the two cultural and tourism products, situating them in the contexts of traditionality and modernity on the one hand, and globalization and localization on the other. In the later part, their paper attempted to evaluate the economic, social and political implications of the festival and carnival on tourism development in Nigeria. In conclusion, they affirmed that with products such as Calabar Festival and Carnival Calabar, Nigeria may already have started the process of economic

diversification from oil driven economy to ecological/cultural tourism-driven economy of the future. They recommended the fortification of the tourism industry, particularly in the areas of security and privatization for accelerated growth.

Methodology

The cross-sectional research design was adopted for the study. The population of adopted all the local government areas of Cross River State – Abi, Akamkpa, Bekwarra, Biase, Boki, Calabar, Ikom, Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Odukpani, Ogoja, Yakurr and Yala. The study centered on Calabar Municipal Council, Ministry Culture and Tourism with population of 320 employees. The sample technique adopted Taro Yamane formula to obtain the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + N)(e)^2}$$

Where n= sample size required; N = number of people in the population e = allowable error (%) Substituting the value of 320 into the equation

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{320}{(1 + 320)(0.05)^2} \\ &= 177.77 \\ &\approx 178 \text{ sample size} \end{aligned}$$

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Questionnaire Administration, N= 178

S/No	Tourist Agency	Total questionnaire	Returned questionnaire	Unreturned questionnaire
1	State Ministry of Tourism and Culture	178	142 (79.78%)	36(20.22%)
	Total	178	142	36

The questionnaire of 178 were administered to the State Ministry of Tourism and culture in Calabar the state capital of Cross Rivers State and 142 representing 79.78% were returned and 36 representing 20.22% were not returned.

Testing of Hypotheses
Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and tourism product development in Nigeria.

Table 2: Model summary of e-marketing of cultural festival and tourism product development

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.990 ^a	.981	.977	3.75312	.981	302.500	1	6	.000	2.409

- a. Predictors: (Constant), e-marketing cultural festival
- b. Dependent Variable: Tourism product development

Table 2 revealed the model result of hypothesis one indicating that there is significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and tourism product development at correlation coefficient r, =.990, and pv= .000.

The decision rule states that we accept the null hypothesis at 0.05% significant while greater than the 0.05% we uphold the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and revenue generation in Nigeria?

Table 3: Model summary of e-marketing of cultural festival and revenue generation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.986 ^a	.973	.968	4.46261	.973	212.605	1	6	.000	2.025

a. Predictors: (Constant), e-marketing cultural festival

b. Dependent Variable: Revenue generation

Table 3 showed the model result of hypothesis two revealing that there is significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and revenue generation at correlation coefficient r , .986, and p -value = .000. The decision rule states that we accept the null hypothesis at 0.05% significant while greater than the 0.05% we uphold the alternate hypothesis.

Discussion of findings

The result revealed that there is significant relationship between e-marketing of cultural festival and tourism product development in Nigeria. It also showed that e-marketing plays a significant role on the development of tourism product in Nigeria. The result identified that e-marketing of cultural festival enhances revenue generation and employment of youths. The present study agrees with the works of Odigbo, et al, (2015); Olugbamila, et al (2012) and Esekong & Ibok (2011) .

Conclusion

The place of e-marketing of cultural festival on the enhancement of tourism development in Nigeria cannot be overstated. The e-marketing is an internet based marketing approach that promote and advertise cultural festival using web-element to draw the attention of the target market to the time, date, and venue of the cultural festival. The cultural festival contributes immensely to the development of tourism in Cross River State. The participants and spectators of cultural festival may lodge in the hotels within the time of these activities. This will definitely impact positively on revenue generation in that particular area where petty traders will strive very well. However, the adoption of e-marketing of cultural festival will continue to attract potential and current tourists to Cross River State. By implication, e-marketing of cultural festival have significant and positive impact on tourism product development and revenue generation.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i. The Government should create an active website with cultural festival page for tourism development on major social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- ii. The state's tourism bureau should explore and use different options (web sites, emails, web advertising) to connect with current and potential tourists, communicate with travel agencies and publicize on different web pages, among other things.
- iii. The tourism bureau should employ the services of a social media expert with depth knowledge of marketing.
- iv. A periodic report should be sent to the Tourism Bureau on the trend of site visitation as this would help the Marketing Manager to enhance his e-marketing strategy.

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